

REMARKS

This application, as amended herein, contains claims 1, 2, 4 - 19, and newly added claims 20 - 22. Claim 3 has been canceled.

Applicant affirms the election of Group I claims 1 -16. However, claim 17 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Rejoined of claims 17-19, based on their dependency from claim 1, which, in view of the Remarks below, is now believed to be in a condition for allowance, is respectfully requested.

The objection to the drawings is noted. A replacement drawing sheet and a new sheet are attached. New Figs 3A to 3D illustrate portions of the apparatus of Fig. 1. Support for the new drawing may be found in the paragraphs of the specification above that have been amended. No new matter has been added. As a result, the "stiffener" of claims 4, 5 and 11 is now illustrated. The objection to the mesh housing is not understood. However, by way of clarification, the attention of the examiner is directed to page 4, lines 10 - 17 of the specification, and the change in reference numeral 11 to 12, and the addition of a new reference numeral 11 in Fig. 1 of the drawings, so as to be consistent with the above mentioned portion of the specification. The language of claim 1 has also been amended to be consistent with the specification. Again, no new matter has been added.

Claims 1-16 were rejected as obvious over Wachtel in view of Tsuyoshi et al. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite an apparatus for washing items, comprising a generally cylindrical housing having a mesh covering; a first wall and a second wall, said first wall and said second wall being disposed perpendicularly to a longitudinal axis of said housing, and within said housing, so as to define first, second and third compartments in said housing; an opening in each of said compartments through which an item to be washed can be placed in or removed from a respective compartment; and a closure device for each of said compartments for closing said compartments to retain said items in said compartments when said items are being washed.

None of the prior art teaches or suggests such a three-compartment arrangement, defined by the first wall and the second wall being disposed perpendicularly to a longitudinal axis of said housing. Wachtel's single wall is parallel to the longitudinal axis of the simple laundry bag disclosed therein. Tsuyoshi adds nothing to Wachtel in this regard. Thus, the present invention has three successive and separate compartments, each with its own closure, arranged in a line, so that items to be washed can be separately placed in one of the compartments, and isolated from other items to be washed. It is submitted that neither Wachtel nor Tsuyoshi et al, whether taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the arrangement of claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that claim 1 is directed to patentable subject matter.

Newly added claim 20, which depends from claim 1, more specifically defines the structure of the apparatus by reciting that the first compartment is disposed at a first end of said housing, the second compartment is disposed at a second end of said housing, and said third compartment is disposed between said first compartment and said second compartment. Support for this claim may be found in Fig. 1, and throughout the specification. This arrangement allows a sorted item or items to be easily placed in successive compartments. The apparatus of claim 20 is not shown or suggested in the prior art. Thus, it is submitted that claim 20 is allowable.

Newly added claim 21, which depends from claim 20, recites that the opening and the closure device of said third compartment extend circumferentially about said housing so as to define a first cylindrical portion of said housing and a second cylindrical portion of said housing. Support for this amendment may also be found in Fig. 1, and throughout the specification. The arrangement of claim 21 conveniently allows the third (center) compartment to be filed by splitting the apparatus into two cylindrical portions when the closure device (for example, a zipper in the preferred, illustrated embodiment) is opened, and re-forming the cylindrical arrangement when the closure device is closed (Fig. 2). Thus, it is submitted that claim 21 is also allowable.

Except for newly added claim 22 discussed below, the remaining claims depend from independent claim 1. These claims include further recitations, which in combination

with those of claim 1, are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record.

Claim 10 recites that the generally cylindrical housing has a first cylindrical portion and a second cylindrical portion, and a closure device for releaseably connecting said first cylindrical portion and said second cylindrical portion. It is similar in many respects to claim 21. For the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 21, it is submitted that claim 10 is also directed to patentable subject matter.

Claim 11 recites that the apparatus further comprises a circular end panel at each end of said housing, said end panels each having an endless pocket and a stiffener disposed within said pocket. This structure helps to define the generally cylindrical shape of the apparatus. Neither Wachtel nor Tsuyoshi et al, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest the arrangement of claim 11. It is submitted that claim 11 is directed to patentable subject matter.

Claims 12 - 16 deal with the connecting member for connecting a first of said end panels, said first cylindrical portion, said second cylindrical portion, and a second of said end panels, as generally defined in claim 12, and more specifically defined in claims 13 - 16. In the illustrated, preferred embodiment, this is folded fabric strip 60, the form and function of which is best illustrated in Fig. 1. Thus, in accordance with the arrangement of the present invention, as set forth in claims 12 - 16, the connecting member permits the three

compartments of the apparatus to be wide open for receiving and removing items to be washed, while the connecting member keeps the various portions of the apparatus together, so that they are not lost or misplaced, and properly aligned for closing by the closure device for each compartment. None of the prior art of record comes anywhere close to teaching or suggesting this arrangement. Thus, it is submitted that claims 12 - 16 are also directed to patentable subject matter.

Newly added claim 22 combines the recitations of claims 1, 20, 21, 11 and 12. For the reasons set forth above for each of these claims, any one of which would be sufficient, it is submitted that claim 22 is directed to patentable subject matter. None of the art of record, alone or in combination, discloses the specific arrangement of claim 22.

Applicant requests an extension of time of one month for the filing of this Amendment. Please charge deposit account no. 502244 in the amount of \$85 (\$60 for the extension of time, and \$25 for the presentation of one additional claim over 20 claims). A duplicate of this last page is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

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